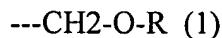


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A polymer compound comprising:
an alkali soluble group (i), wherein
at least one hydrogen atom of a hydroxyl group in the alkali soluble group (i) is
protected by an acid dissociable, dissolution inhibiting group (ii) represented by the
general formula (1):



(wherein R represents an organic group containing no more than 20 carbon atoms
and at least one hydrophilic group), and

wherein the polymer compound exhibits changed alkali solubility under the action
of acid.

2. (Currently amended) a polymer compound according to claim 1, wherein the
alkali soluble group (i) is ~~at least one~~ selected from the group consisting of an alcoholic hydroxyl
group, a phenolic hydroxyl group, or and a carboxyl group.

3. (Original) A polymer compound according to claim 2, wherein a carbon atom
adjacent to the carbon atom connected to the alcoholic hydroxyl group is bonded to at least one
fluorine atom.

4. (Currently amended) A polymer compound according to claim 1, wherein the
hydrophilic group is ~~at least one~~ selected from the group consisting of a carbonyl group, an ester
group, an alcoholic hydroxyl group, an ether group, an imino group, or and an amino group.

5. (Original) A photoresist composition comprising:

 a base material resin component (A) which exhibits changed alkali
 solubility under the action of acid; and

 an acid generator component (B) which generates the acid on exposure to
 radiation, wherein

 the base material resin component (A) is the polymer compound according
 to any one of claims 1 to 4.

6. (Original) A resist pattern formation method comprising:

 forming a photoresist film on a substrate using the photoresist composition
 according to claim 5;

exposing the photoresist film; and
developing the exposed photoresist film to form a resist pattern.